

# NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 23, 2004**

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## **MARKEY INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT THE OPERATION OF AMUSEMENT PARK RIDES BY CHILDREN**

*“Children Should Enjoy the Rides, Not Operate Them” Says Markey*

Washington, DC: Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) announced today the introduction of legislation to set a minimum age of 18 years for operators of amusement park rides. At least nine states, as well as the Walt Disney Corporation, already have adopted such a requirement. The Markey bill, titled the Amusement Park Ride Child Labor Act (HR 4190), would extend those protections to apply to all amusement park rides nationwide, not just to a few states or a few parks.

“For the sake of both the young employees and the park patrons, who are disproportionately children themselves, the Department of Labor should recognize that operating roller coasters and thrill rides requires split-second judgments that, if mishandled, can injure both the operator and dozens of riders,” said Markey. “Let minors take the non-hazardous jobs in our parks –let adults operate the rides.”

“Eight hundred employees are injured operating amusement park rides each year,” Markey noted, citing government statistics. “The potential for dangerous, debilitating and sometimes deadly consequences when persons operating amusement park rides make misjudgments, either in the operation of the ride itself or in the reaction to a situation brought on by rider error or ride malfunction, is very serious.”

During 2001, nonfatal injuries suffered by amusement ride attendants totaled 2,475, and nearly one out of every five injuries was suffered by a child employee, according to the Department of Labor.

The nine states that already have an 18-year minimum age requirement for ride operators include Alaska, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Some include exemption for “kiddie rides,” but all have adopted state standards that make it the rule, not the exception, that minors shall not operate the vast majority of park rides in their states.

In addition, the Walt Disney Corporation has already recognized the wisdom of avoiding having youngsters placed in charge of the safe operation of their park rides. As a matter of park policy, Disney will not allow anyone younger than 18 years of age to operate a Disney ride.

“The fact is that in the past 15 years, the speed and complexity of amusement park rides has risen dramatically,” Markey continued. “All of the nation’s 15 fastest coasters have been built in the last 10 years. But clearly, the margin for error is much narrower for the operator of a ride traveling at 100 mph than on a ride traveling 50 mph. People make mistakes, and the riders often act like children, because they often are children. This situation is dangerously compounded by allowing young teenagers to be put in charge of running these high-tech, high-speed machines.”

The full statement of introduction and the text of the bill are available at [www.house.gov/Markey](http://www.house.gov/Markey).